Pv 5 — Tirokuḍḍha Sutta: Outside the Walls

English translation by Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monastery (Sutta Friends).

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Text

The Supreme Buddha gave this sermon to King Bimbisāra after an alms offering to the Sangha.

After they have been born in the ghost world, departed relatives will come back to their own houses and stand by the doors. They also stand outside walls and at intersections.

Some people in the family will enjoy delicious food without remembering their departed relatives. Departed relatives are forgotten because of their own bad karma.

Some compassionate people offer delicious food and drink to virtuous people and share merits with their departed relatives saying, “Let this be for our relatives! May our relatives be happy!” Departed relatives gather to these places and highly appreciate the offering. They bless their relatives saying, “May our relatives who compassionately offered us these gifts have long, happy, and healthy lives.” The givers also gain good results.

Beings in the ghost world do not farm, herd cattle, trade, buy, sell, or use gold and money. They survive on merits shared by humans. As water that rains on a mountain-top flows down to the bottom, so will the merits shared from the human world reach the beings in the ghost world. Just as streams of water fill the ocean, so will the merits shared from the human world reach the beings in the ghost world. One should share merits with departed relatives recalling, “He gave to me, he worked for me, he was a relative, friend, and companion.”

Weeping, sorrow, and crying will not benefit departed relatives in any way. They will remain in the ghost world no matter how much we cry.

Great King, the merits shared from the donations given to the noble disciples of the Buddha will be received by the departed relatives right away. They will enjoy happiness for a long time. Sharing merits with departed relatives is a very good habit to develop. You have respected departed relatives and supported the monks. By doing this you have collected much merit which will result in extraordinary happiness for a long time, Great King.